

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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O R 061009Z MAY 75
FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2486
INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

S E C R E T SINGAPORE 1869

C O R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 6)

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: PFOR, SN
SUBJ: LEE KUAN YEW VISIT TO WASHINGTON

ASSISTANT SECRETARY HABIB FROM AMBASSADOR CRONK

1. I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO PASS ON A FEW LAST MINUTE
THOUGHTS AND SUGGESTIONS PRIOR TO THE VARIOUS MEETINGS WHICH
YOU, THE SECRETARY AND THE PRESIDENT WILL HAVE WITH LEE KUAN
YEW IN THE NEXT TWO DAYS.

2. I HAVE SEEN LEE TWICE SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE VIETNAM
DEBACLE AND ON EACH OCCASION HE WAS QUITE EMOTIONALLY DIS-
TRESSED ABOUT CAMBODIA AND VIETNAM BLAMING IT LARGELY ON
WATERGATE AND THE LACK OF WILL OF THE CONGRESS. AT SAME TIME,
HE WAS DISPOSED TO BE QUITE HELPFUL TO OUR REQUESTS FOR SPECIFIC
ASSISTANCE. HE LEFT SINGAPORE APRIL 22 AND I HAVE ONLY BEEN
ABLE TO FOLLOW THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIS THINKING THROUGH PRESS
REPORTS.

3. LEE'S INITIAL INTENT IN VISITING WASHINGTON WAS TO DEVELOP
QUOTE: A FEEL UNQUOTE FOR THE NEW ADMINISTRATION AND THE
POLITICAL CLIMATE IN THE UNITED STATES. HE SEEMS TO BELIEVE
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(AND FEAR) THAT THE DEMOCRATS WILL WIN THE PRESIDENCY IN 1976
AND HE WILL PROBABLY BE SPENDING SOME OF HIS TIME TRYING TO
DISCOVER WHAT FORCES WOULD DOMINATE A DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATION
AND THE POLICIES THEY MIGHT PURSUE. THE FALL OF CAMBODIA AND

VIETNAM HAVE ADDED A NEW DIMENSION TO HIS VISIT. LEE WILL PROBABLY BE TRYING TO DETERMINE HOW THE ADMINISTRATION IS REACTING TO THESE DEVELOPMENTS AND TO ASSESS FUTURE OF U.S. POLICY IN ASIA AND ESPECIALLY SOUTHEAST ASIA. HE WILL BE PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN THE FIRMNESS OF OUR SECURITY COMMITMENTS AND OUR FUTURE FORCE DISPOSITIONS.

4. LEE'S RECENT PUBLIC AND PRIVATE REMARKS HAVE TENDED TO STRESS THE FOLLOWING:

A) THE NIXON DOCTRINE IS DEAD; THE MAJOR COMMUNIST POWERS HAVE BEEN MORE PERSISTENT AND EFFECTIVE IN HELPING THEIR ALLIES THAN THE DEMOCRACIES.

B) MILITARY FORCE CANNOT SUCCESSFULLY DEFEAT COMMUNIST INSURGENCY UNLESS THE GOVERNMENT INVOLVED IS ABLE TO BRING ABOUT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL JUSTICE.

C) THE DOMINO THEORY HAS LITTLE VALIDITY, BUT THE COUNTRIES OF THE AREA SHOULD BE CONCERNED OVER THE USE TO WHICH HANOI MAY PUT THE ARMS THAT HAVE BEEN CAPTURED IN VIETNAM. FURTHERMORE, COMMUNIST SUCCESSES IN VIETNAM WILL ENCOURAGE INSURGENTS ELSEWHERE IN THE AREA.

D) IT IS IN EVERYONE'S INTEREST, INCLUDING THE PRC, THAT THE U.S. WITHDRAW FORCES ONLY GRADUALLY FROM THE ASIAN MAINLAND. A CONTINUING AMERICAN NAVAL PRESENCE AND INCREASED ECONOMIC RELATIONS WILL BE USEFUL TO THE AREA.

E) THAILAND MAY HAVE A GRACE PERIOD OF TWO TO THREE YEARS WHILE HANOI IS CONSOLIDATING ITS VICTORY AND SORTING OUT ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRG AND GRUNK.

F) THAILAND MAY BE EXPECTED TO AND IN FACT SHOULD MOVE CLOSER TO THE PRC WITH A VIEW TO HAVING THE PRC RESTRAIN HANOI'S SUPPORT FOR INSURGENCY AGAINST THAILAND (LEE IS GREATLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE WEAKNESS OF THE THAI GOVERNMENT AND ITS ABILITY TO CONTAIN THAI INSURGENCY).

G) ASEAN SHOULD PLAY A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN REGIONAL AFFAIRS.

5. LEE MAY BE SOMEWHAT CONCERNED BY PRESS STATEMENTS, (E.G. WASHINGTON STAR MAY 4) INDICATING THAT THE U.S. HAS ITS EYE
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ON SINGAPORE'S NAVAL BASE AND FUEL STORAGE FARM. HE MAY WONDER WHETHER THESE REPORTS INDICATE OUR INTENTION TO PRESS HIM FOR INCREASED ACCESS TO MILITARY FACILITIES IN SINGAPORE.

6. GIVEN THE ABOVE BACKGROUND, I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT THAT IN THE FORTHCOMING CONVERSATIONS WITH LEE WE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO CONVEY OUR REALISTIC ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION AND REFLECT A MOOD OF QUIET CONFIDENCE WHICH RECOGNIZES THAT THE U.S. HAS SUFFERED A SIGNIFICANT DEFEAT IN INDOCHINA BUT THAT WE WILL REMAIN A PACIFIC POWER AND INTEND TO CONTINUE TO PROJECT OUR INFLUENCE RESPONSIBLY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. AT THE SAME TIME, WE WOULD HOPE THAT THE COUNTRIES OF SEA WILL OVERCOME THEIR SHOCK OVER RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND DEVELOP A MORE CONCERTED

AND EFFECTIVE APPROACH -- POSSIBLY THROUGH ASEAN -- TO THE THREAT OF FURTHER COMMUNIST ENCROACHMENTS IN THE AREA. THIS SHOULD BE THE MAIN THRUST OF OUR CONVERSATION WITH HIM.

7. IN ADDITION TO A BROAD POLICY DISCUSSION OF SEA, WHICH WILL BE HIS MAIN INTEREST, I RECOMMEND WE RAISE THE FOLLOWING SPECIFIC PROBLEMS WITH HIM:

A) REFUGEES: EXPRESS OUR APPRECIATION FOR THE PRIME MINISTER'S POSITIVE RESPONSE TO OUR CONTINGENCY PLAN TO USE SINGAPORE AS A STAGING AREA FOR REFUGEES. RECOGNIZE THE SERIOUS PROBLEM NOW CONFRONTING THE GOS WITH RESPECT TO APPROXIMATELY 7,000 REFUGEES CURRENTLY IN SINGAPORE WATERS. NOTE THAT WE ARE TRYING TO COPE WITH THE EXTRAORDINARY NUMBER OF REFUGEES IN THE PHILIPPINES AND GUAM AND URGE LEE TO ALLOW THE REFUGEES IN SINGAPORE WATERS TO BE QUARTERED TEMPORARILY IN REFUGEE CAMPS UNTIL INTERNATIONAL RESETTLEMENT AGENCIES AND GOVERNMENTS CAN ASSIST IN THEIR RESETTLEMENT. HE WILL SEEK ASSURANCES THAT WE WILL ACCEPT ALL THOSE WHO CAN'T BE SETTLED ELSEWHERE AND SINGAPORE DOESN'T WANT.

B) VIETNAM MILITARY EQUIPMENT IN SINGAPORE:
SEE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN SINGAPORE 1794. ASIDE FROM RECENT ARRIVAL OF FIVE VIETNAMESE NAVY CRAFT OF LITTLE OR NO VALUE, THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE IN SITUATION.

C) NAVAL BASIN AND FUEL DEPOT: WE SHOULD TELL LEE THAT WE HAVE NO GRANDIOSE PLANS FOR EXPANDING OUR USE OF SINGAPORE'S
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NAVAL BASIN AND FUEL DEPOT. ALL WE WANT IS CONTINUED AND PREFERRED ACCESS TO THEM (AS WE HAVE HAD FOR YEARS). WE THINK IT IMPORTANT THIS ACCESS BE PROVIDED IN EMERGENCIES AND THAT FUEL WOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE EVEN IF THERE WERE ANOTHER ARAB EMBARGO. WE SEE CERTAIN POLITICAL ADVANTAGES IN HAVING THESE FACILITIES MADE AVAILABLE TO US THROUGH THE RESIDUAL ANZUK POWER (NEW ZEALAND) BUT IF THIS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE WE WOULD BE HAPPY TO WORK OUT AN ARRANGEMENT WITH THE GOS.

D) A-4 TRAINING IN THE PHILIPPINES: WE THINK IT UNLIKELY THAT LEE WILL RAISE THIS QUESTION, BUT IF HE DOES, RECOMMEND WE RESPOND THAT WE WILL SERIOUSLY CONSIDER HIS PROPOSAL ONCE THE GOS HAS OBTAINED FORMAL APPROVAL FROM THE PHILIPPINES GOVERNMENT.

E) ASEAN: WHILE WE SHOULD SUPPORT A STRENGTHENING OF ASEAN AS AN INSTRUMENT OF CONSULTATION AND COOPERATION, WE SHOULD NOT PRESS LEE TO PLAY THE LEADING ROLE IN THIS. FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS, HE IS NOT THE APPROPRIATE ONE TO TAKE THAT ON, BUT HE CAN SUPPORT IT. CRONK

SECRET

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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